visited India on June 2-4, 2005.

(b) The whole range of bilateral issues and other matters of mutual interest were discussed.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

**Minister's Sri Lanka visit**

1157. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Sri Lanka during the month of June, 2005;

(b) if so, whether aim was to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries;

(c) whether the two countries recently decided to conclude negotiations on a comprehensive economic partnership agreement by end of 2005 so as to give a new thrust to bilateral business activity;

(d) if so, what was outcome of the visit;

(e) what were the agreements reached between the two countries; and

(f) what steps are being taken to implement them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir. The Minister of External Affairs visited Sri Lanka on June 9-11, 2005.

(b) The purpose of the visit was to discuss the whole range of bilateral relations and other issues of mutual interest. Ways of enhancing trade and economic cooperation featured prominently in these discussions.

(c) It has been agreed that it is desirable to conclude the negotiations by the end of 2005.

(d) It was noted during the visit that the negotiations for the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement are progressing satisfactorily. The negotiators have been asked to expedite the remaining work keeping in mind the desirability of concluding negotiations by the end of 2005.

(e) A Memorandum of Understanding on Small Development Projects and an Educational Exchange Programme were signed.

(f) Small Development projects complement and augment the extensive economic and technical cooperation programme that India already runs in Sri Lanka by taking up small, quick-yield projects. These projects will be assessed for their impact and executed as per government guidelines as and when proposals are approved by competent authorities. So far, only one project has been received for assessment and is yet to be sanctioned. The Educational Exchange Programme is being implemented by encouraging development of contacts and cooperation between the educational institutions of the two Governments, based on their respective academic and educational needs.

**Haj quota**

1158. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether applications received to undertake Haj pilgrimage this year has exceeded the quota fixed by Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of the State-wise quota for this year;

(c) whether Government have any plan to raise the quota for this year; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of applications received alongwith the details of the State-wise quota for Haj 2006 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) No decision is taken so far on the requests of some State Governments and State Haj Committees to increase the quota.